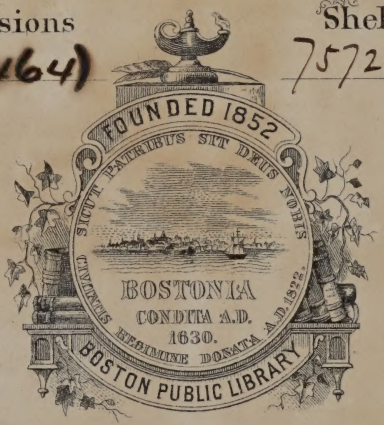
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08653 156 1

767

Accessions
(37464)

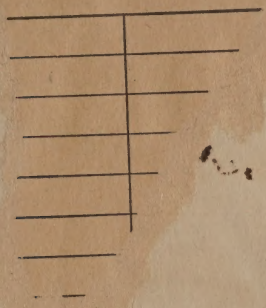
Shelf No.
7572.162



Received Apr. 20, 1892.

on Public Library

k is to be returned to the
or before the date last stamped



ILLITERACY

IN

MASSACHUSETTS.

BY

HORACE G. WADLIN.

BOSTON:
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING COMPANY,
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.
1888.

ILLITERACY

IN

MASSACHUSETTS.

BY

HORACE G. WADLIN.

BOSTON:
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING COMPANY,
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.
1888.

ILLITERACY IN MASSACHUSETTS.*

The Decennial Census of the Commonwealth, taken during the year 1885, the results of which are now in process of compilation for publication by the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, affords definite information as to the condition of our State with respect to illiteracy, and by comparison with the statistics of the Census of 1875 enables us to determine whether illiteracy is increasing or diminishing within our borders and whether the operation of the statutes relating to education is such as to commend them to continued support or to subject them to criticism and revision.

At the outset it should be understood that cénsus illiteracy is illiteracy reduced to its lowest terms. That is, every person ten years of age and over, who is unable either to write or to read, or who is able neither to write nor read, is, for census purposes, deemed illiterate; and no person, no matter how narrow his education, who is able to write and read in any language is classed as illiterate.

Illiteracy, within the limits above defined, is, it will be seen, of three degrees. The first class comprises those unable to read but who profess to be able to write. This class is the least numerous, and at first sight implies a peculiar condition, but every census of the population discloses a few who fall within it. The next class includes those able to read who cannot write, and the third class comprises absolute illiterates who can neither read nor write.

With this explanation of the basis upon which the census of illiterates is taken we are ready to inspect the returns.

The following table presents the number of illiterates and the degree of illiteracy, by age periods, for the State; and exhibits also the nativity of these illiterates so far as to determine whether they were born in Massachusetts, other States or territories, or were foreign born: —

* The author is under obligations to the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor for Tables I. to IV., reproduced entire from Part 2 of Volume I. of the Decennial Census now in press.

TABLE I. — *Number of Illiterates. 1885.*

THE STATE, DEGREE OF ILLITERACY, AND AGE PERIODS.	BORN IN MASSACHUSETTS.			OTHER NATIVE BORN.			FOREIGN BORN.			AGGREGATES.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
THE STATE,	4,403	3,894	8,297	2,332	3,269	5,601	38,815	69,550	108,365	45,550	76,713	122,263
Cannot read,	19	8	27	4	5	9	71	26	97	94	39	133
10 to 13 years,	1	–	1	–	1	1	–	–	–	1	1	2
14 to 19 years,	4	2	6	–	–	–	3	1	4	7	3	10
20 to 29 years,	4	2	6	–	–	–	23	7	30	27	9	36
30 to 49 years,	7	1	8	4	2	6	32	10	42	43	13	56
50 years and over,	3	3	6	–	2	2	13	8	21	16	13	29
Cannot write,	1,516	1,540	3,056	601	997	1,598	5,875	14,831	20,706	7,992	17,368	25,360
10 to 13 years,	673	448	1,121	142	88	230	332	310	642	1,147	846	1,993
14 to 19 years,	224	188	412	85	83	168	543	672	1,215	852	943	1,795
20 to 29 years,	223	309	532	101	209	310	1,009	2,025	3,034	1,333	2,543	3,876
30 to 49 years,	194	334	528	154	393	547	2,258	6,464	8,722	2,606	7,191	9,797
50 years and over,	201	261	462	119	223	342	1,729	5,360	7,089	2,049	5,844	7,893
Age unknown,	1	–	1	–	1	1	4	–	4	5	1	6
Neither read nor write,	2,868	2,346	5,214	1,727	2,267	3,994	32,869	54,693	87,562	37,464	59,306	96,770
10 to 13 years,	438	353	791	109	87	196	463	412	875	1,010	852	1,862
14 to 19 years,	542	377	919	250	265	515	2,652	2,379	5,031	3,444	3,021	6,465
20 to 29 years,	653	583	1,236	356	507	863	6,378	7,456	13,834	7,387	8,546	15,933
30 to 49 years,	651	585	1,236	630	879	1,509	12,614	21,750	34,364	13,895	23,214	37,109
50 years and over,	583	448	1,031	378	528	906	10,748	22,688	33,436	11,709	23,664	35,373
Age unknown,	1	–	1	4	1	5	14	8	22	19	9	28
Total Illiterates,	4,403	3,894	8,297	2,332	3,269	5,601	38,815	69,550	108,365	45,550	76,713	122,263
10 to 13 years,	1,112	801	1,913	251	176	427	795	722	1,517	2,158	1,699	3,857
14 to 19 years,	770	567	1,337	335	348	683	3,198	3,052	6,250	4,303	3,967	8,270
20 to 29 years,	880	894	1,774	457	716	1,173	7,410	9,488	16,898	8,747	11,098	19,845
30 to 49 years,	852	920	1,772	788	1,274	2,062	14,904	28,224	43,128	16,544	30,418	46,962
50 years and over,	787	712	1,499	497	753	1,250	12,490	28,056	40,546	13,774	29,521	43,295
Age unknown,	2	–	2	4	2	6	18	8	26	24	10	34

An analysis of this table may be most effectively made with the assistance of Table II., in which the statistics contained in Table I. are reduced to the percentage basis.

TABLE II. — *Percentage of Illiterates. 1885.*

THE STATE, DEGREE OF ILLITERACY, AND AGE PERIODS.	BORN IN MASSACHUSETTS.			OTHER NATIVE BORN.			FOREIGN BORN.			AGGREGATES.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
THE STATE,	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Cannot read,	0.43	0.21	0.33	0.17	0.15	0.16	0.18	0.04	0.09	0.21	0.05	0.11
10 to 13 years,	0.02	–	0.02	–	0.03	0.02	–	–	–	–	–	–
14 to 19 years,	0.09	0.05	0.07	–	–	–	0.01	–	–	0.02	–	0.01
20 to 29 years,	0.09	0.05	0.07	–	–	–	0.06	0.01	0.03	0.06	0.01	0.03
30 to 49 years,	0.16	0.03	0.10	0.17	0.06	0.11	0.08	0.02	0.04	0.09	0.02	0.05
50 years and over,	0.07	0.08	0.07	–	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.02
Cannot write,	34.43	39.55	36.83	25.77	30.50	28.53	15.14	21.32	19.10	17.54	22.64	20.74
10 to 13 years,	15.29	11.50	13.51	6.09	2.69	4.10	0.86	0.44	0.59	2.52	1.10	1.63
14 to 19 years,	5.09	4.83	4.97	3.65	2.54	3.00	1.40	0.97	1.12	1.87	1.23	1.47
20 to 29 years,	5.06	7.94	6.41	4.33	6.39	5.53	2.60	2.91	2.80	2.92	3.32	3.17
30 to 49 years,	4.40	8.58	6.36	6.60	12.02	9.77	5.82	9.29	8.05	5.72	9.37	8.01
50 years and over,	4.57	6.70	5.57	5.10	6.83	6.11	4.45	7.71	6.54	4.50	7.62	6.46
Age unknown,	0.02	–	0.01	–	0.03	0.02	0.01	–	–	0.01	–	–
Neither read nor write,	65.14	60.24	62.84	74.06	69.35	71.31	84.68	78.64	80.81	82.25	77.31	79.15
10 to 13 years,	9.95	9.07	9.53	4.67	2.66	3.50	1.19	0.60	0.81	2.22	1.11	1.53
14 to 19 years,	12.31	9.68	11.07	10.72	8.11	9.19	6.83	3.42	4.65	7.56	3.94	5.29
20 to 29 years,	14.83	14.97	14.90	15.27	15.51	15.41	16.43	10.72	12.76	16.22	11.14	13.03
30 to 49 years,	14.79	15.02	14.90	27.02	26.89	26.94	32.50	31.27	31.71	30.51	30.26	30.35
50 years and over,	13.24	11.50	12.43	16.21	16.15	16.18	27.69	32.62	30.86	25.70	30.85	28.93
Age unknown,	0.02	–	0.01	0.17	0.03	0.09	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.02
Total Illiterates,	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
10 to 13 years,	25.26	20.57	23.06	10.76	5.38	7.62	2.05	1.04	1.40	4.74	2.21	3.16
14 to 19 years,	17.49	14.56	16.11	14.37	10.65	12.19	8.24	4.39	5.77	9.45	5.17	6.77
20 to 29 years,	19.98	22.96	21.38	19.60	21.90	20.94	19.09	13.64	15.59	19.20	14.47	16.23
30 to 49 years,	19.35	23.63	21.36	33.79	38.97	36.82	38.40	40.58	39.80	36.32	39.65	38.41
50 years and over,	17.88	18.28	18.07	21.31	23.04	22.32	32.17	40.34	37.42	30.24	38.49	35.41
Age unknown,	0.04	–	0.02	0.17	0.06	0.11	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.02

An inspection of these tables shows that out of 122,263, the aggregate number of illiterates of all degrees, only 133, or one-tenth of one per cent., are reported as able to write but not read; 25,360, or 20.74 per cent., can read but not write; while 96,770, or 79.16 per cent., are absolute illiterates, able neither to read nor write.

Of the aggregate number of illiterates, 108,365 are foreign born; 5,601 are native born on territory exterior to Massachusetts; while 8,297 are natives of Massachusetts. Of illiterates born in Massachusetts, 5,214, being 62.85 per cent., or slightly more than three-fifths of the illiterates native to the State, can neither read nor write, and this comparatively small increment represents absolute illiteracy for which the Commonwealth is unquestionably responsible, inasmuch as it is its own product, and should have come under the influence of its schools.

The question at once arises, what relative proportion does this native illiteracy bear to the whole number of illiterates, and to the total native population ten years of age and over? This question and others of equal interest are answered by the two tables which follow, Tables III. and IV.: —

TABLE III. — *Percentages of Native and Foreign Born Illiterates of Total Illiterates. 1885.*

THE STATE, DEGREE OF ILLITERACY, AND AGE PERIODS.	MALES.			FEMALES.			BOTH SEXES.		
	Born in Massachusetts.	Other Native Born	Foreign Born.	Born in Massachusetts.	Other Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Born in Massachusetts.	Other Native Born.	Foreign Born.
THE STATE,	9.67	5.12	85.21	5.08	4.26	90.66	6.79	4.58	88.63
Cannot read,	20.21	4.26	75.53	20.51	12.82	66.67	20.30	6.77	72.93
10 to 13 years,	100.00	–	–	–	100.00	–	50.00	50.00	–
14 to 19 years,	57.14	–	42.86	66.67	–	33.33	60.00	–	40.00
20 to 29 years,	14.81	–	85.19	22.22	–	77.78	16.67	–	83.33
30 to 49 years,	16.28	9.30	74.42	7.69	15.39	76.92	14.29	10.71	75.00
50 years and over,	18.75	–	81.25	23.08	15.38	61.54	20.69	6.90	72.41
Cannot write,	18.97	7.52	73.51	8.87	5.74	85.39	12.05	6.30	81.65
10 to 13 years,	58.67	12.38	28.95	52.96	10.40	36.64	56.25	11.54	32.21
14 to 19 years,	26.29	9.98	63.73	19.94	8.80	71.26	22.95	9.36	67.69
20 to 29 years,	16.73	7.58	75.69	12.15	8.22	79.63	13.72	8.00	78.28
30 to 49 years,	7.44	5.91	86.65	4.64	5.47	89.89	5.39	5.58	89.03
50 years and over,	9.81	5.81	84.38	4.47	3.81	91.72	5.85	4.33	89.82
Age unknown,	20.00	–	80.00	–	100.00	–	16.66	16.67	66.67
Neither read nor write,	7.66	4.61	87.73	3.96	3.82	92.22	5.39	4.13	90.48
10 to 13 years,	43.37	10.79	45.84	41.43	10.21	48.36	42.48	10.53	46.99
14 to 19 years,	15.74	7.26	77.00	12.48	8.77	78.75	14.21	7.97	77.82
20 to 29 years,	8.84	4.82	86.34	6.82	5.93	87.25	7.76	5.42	86.82
30 to 49 years,	4.69	4.53	90.78	2.52	3.79	93.69	3.33	4.07	92.60
50 years and over,	4.98	3.23	91.79	1.89	2.23	95.88	2.92	2.56	94.52
Age unknown,	5.26	21.05	73.69	–	11.11	88.89	3.57	17.86	78.57
Total Illiterates,	9.67	5.12	85.21	5.08	4.26	90.66	6.79	4.58	88.63
10 to 13 years,	51.53	11.63	36.84	47.14	10.36	42.50	49.60	11.07	39.33
14 to 19 years,	17.89	7.79	74.32	14.30	8.77	76.93	16.17	8.26	75.57
20 to 29 years,	10.06	5.22	84.72	8.06	6.45	85.49	8.94	5.91	85.15
30 to 49 years,	5.15	4.76	90.09	3.02	4.19	92.79	3.77	4.39	91.84
50 years and over,	5.71	3.61	90.68	2.41	2.55	95.04	3.46	2.89	93.65
Age unknown,	8.33	16.67	75.00	–	20.00	80.00	5.88	17.65	76.47

TABLE IV. — *Percentages of Illiterates of Population: By Age Periods. 1885.*

NATIVITY AND AGE PERIODS.	POPULATION.			NUMBER OF ILLITERATES.			PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERATES.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Born in Massachusetts,	389,661	412,128	801,789	4,403	3,894	8,297	1.13	0.94	1.03
10 to 13 years,	56,579	56,374	112,953	1,112	801	1,913	1.97	1.42	1.69
14 to 19 years,	74,846	74,445	149,291	770	567	1,337	1.03	0.76	0.90
20 to 29 years,	92,726	100,156	192,882	880	894	1,774	0.95	0.89	0.92
30 to 49 years,	98,300	105,270	203,570	852	920	1,772	0.87	0.87	0.87
50 years and over,	67,194	75,871	143,065	787	712	1,499	1.17	0.94	1.05
Age unknown,	16	12	28	2	–	2	12.50	–	7.14
Other Native Born,	128,850	147,229	276,079	2,332	3,269	5,601	1.81	2.22	2.03
10 to 13 years,	6,971	7,115	14,086	251	176	427	3.60	2.47	3.03
14 to 19 years,	13,616	14,787	28,403	335	348	683	2.46	2.35	2.40
20 to 29 years,	29,664	34,199	63,863	457	716	1,173	1.54	2.09	1.84
30 to 49 years,	48,127	53,860	101,987	788	1,274	2,062	1.64	2.37	2.02
50 years and over,	30,439	37,242	67,681	497	753	1,250	1.63	2.02	1.85
Age unknown,	33	26	59	4	2	6	12.12	7.69	10.17
Foreign Born,	233,236	270,857	504,093	38,815	69,550	108,365	16.64	25.68	21.50
10 to 13 years,	6,960	7,065	14,025	795	722	1,517	11.42	10.22	10.82
14 to 19 years,	20,049	24,991	45,040	3,198	3,052	6,250	15.95	12.21	13.88
20 to 29 years,	55,483	72,522	128,005	7,410	9,488	16,898	13.36	13.08	13.20
30 to 49 years,	98,723	105,859	204,582	14,904	28,224	43,128	15.10	26.66	21.08
50 years and over,	51,986	60,398	112,384	12,490	28,056	40,546	24.03	46.45	36.08
Age unknown,	35	22	57	18	8	26	51.43	36.36	45.61
Aggregates,	751,747	830,214	1,581,961	45,550	76,713	122,263	6.06	9.24	7.73
10 to 13 years,	70,510	70,554	141,064	2,158	1,699	3,857	3.06	2.41	2.73
14 to 19 years,	108,511	114,223	222,734	4,303	3,967	8,270	3.97	3.47	3.71
20 to 29 years,	177,873	206,877	384,750	8,747	11,098	19,845	4.92	5.36	5.16
30 to 49 years,	245,150	264,989	510,139	16,544	30,418	46,962	6.75	11.48	9.21
50 years and over,	149,619	173,511	323,130	13,774	29,521	43,295	9.21	17.01	13.40
Age unknown,	84	60	144	24	10	34	28.57	16.67	23.61

From Table III. it appears that the illiterates of all degrees born in Massachusetts constitute 6.97 per cent. of the aggregate illiterates; that other native born are 4.58 per cent., while 88.63 per cent., or nearly nine-tenths of the whole number of illiterates, are foreign born.

Of the small number of illiterates who simply cannot read, 20.30 per cent. are natives of this State, 6.77 per cent. were born in other States or territories, and 72.93 per cent. are foreign born. Of those who cannot write, 12.05 per cent. were born in Massachusetts, 6.30 per cent. were born in other States or territories, and 81.65 per cent. are foreign born. Of the absolute illiterates, 5.39 per cent. were born in Massachusetts, 4.13 per cent. are natives of other States or territories, and 90.48 per cent. are foreign born.

Returning to the class which is native to our State, it is shown in Table IV. that the illiterates of all degrees and all ages in this class form but 1.03 per cent. of the population ten years of age and over, nearly equally divided between the sexes, the males being slightly in excess. Illiterates native born outside of Massachusetts are 2.03 per cent. of the population of this class. The foreign born illiterates, however, are 21.50 per cent. of the foreign born population, this wide difference bringing the average percentage of illiterates of population down to 7.73 per cent.

Illiterates who are reported as able to write but who cannot read form so small a part of the aggregate number as practically to be of no importance in considering the evil of illiteracy. Those who can read may be said to have passed beyond the confines of illiteracy and already to be on the way to further improvement. Absolute illiteracy, in a Commonwealth of free and compulsory education, is the blot on the escutcheon, but the most superficial analysis of these tables establishes the fact that the larger part of our illiteracy is foreign born, brought here by the growth of our industries and the general development of the Commonwealth. It is the product of countries whose systems of public instruction bear no comparison with our own, and whose children, unfortunately, have not been able to acquire even that rudimentary education which would place them above the line of census illiteracy. The absolute illiterates, natives of this State, and for whose condition the Commonwealth is, as we have said, justly responsible,

number (Table I.) 5,214 in a total of 122,263, or, more graphically, about six-tenths of one per cent. of the Massachusetts born population ten years of age and over. This small increment of native illiteracy of itself testifies to the value of the public schools, and confirms the statement frequently made that the children of Massachusetts are in her schools and not suffered to grow up in ignorance. This fact should never be overlooked by those who point to the aggregate number of illiterates within the State as evidence of the failure of our school system, or to justify the assertion that our school law is not enforced.

But while the present status of our native born population may, of itself, be satisfactory, it is important to know whether illiteracy is increasing; whether, also, such conditions prevail in Massachusetts, growing out of her position as an industrial centre, drawing hither the emigrant who comes to better his position, that foreign born illiteracy is increasing; and finally, whether the present illiterates, both native and foreign born, may be subjected to compulsory educational statutes.

To determine whether illiteracy is increasing or diminishing the following comparative statistics are conclusive: —

TABLE V. — *Illiteracy: 1875 and 1885 Compared.*

YEARS.	POPULATION, 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER.		
	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
1875,	914,183	399,436	1,313,619
1885,	1,077,868	504,093	1,581,961
Increase,	163,685	104,657	268,342
Per cent. of increase,	17.9	26.2	20.4

TABLE V. — Concluded.

YEARS.	NUMBER OF ILLITERATES.		
	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
1875,	12,150	92,363	104,513
1885,	13,898	108,365	122,263
Increase,	1,748	16,002	17,750
Per cent. of increase,	14.4	17.3	16.9

In the foregoing table native born illiterates include those born in other States and territories as well as in Massachusetts, the union of the two classes in the Census of 1875 rendering a similar classification necessary now. If it were possible to separate in the comparison those born in Massachusetts from other native born, the results would undoubtedly be still more favorable to this Commonwealth.

The first point of interest derived from this table is, that while the increase of illiteracy as a whole reaches 16.9 per cent., native born illiterates have increased 14.4 per cent. and foreign born, 17.3 per cent. In other words, the ratio of increase in native born illiterates is less than the increase in aggregate illiteracy, while as to foreign born illiterates a contrary statement is true.

Again, while native born illiterates have increased 14.4 per cent., native born population has increased 17.9 per cent.; foreign born illiterates have increased 17.3 per cent.; foreign born population 26.2 per cent.; total illiteracy has increased 16.9 per cent., and total population 20.4 per cent. That is, *the ratio of increase in illiterates of each class, and of aggregate illiteracy, has been considerably less than the ratio of increase in population of each class, and of total population.* Conclusively then, neither native, foreign born, nor aggregate illiteracy is increasing in Massachusetts so fast as her population is increasing. This shows what may be termed the retardative influence of the schools upon the evil.

It follows, as a matter of course, that the relative proportion which the aggregate illiteracy of each class bears to the population of each class is now less than in 1875. The decrease is shown by percentages in the following table: —

TABLE VI. — *Percentages of Illiterates of Population. 1875 and 1885.*

YEARS.	POPULATION, 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER.		
	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
1875,	914,183	399,436	1,313,619
1885,	1,077,868	504,093	1,581,961

TABLE VI. — Concluded.

YEARS.	PERCENTAGE OF ILLITERATES OF POPULATION OF EACH CLASS.		
	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
1875, ...	1.33	23.12	7.96
1885, ...	1.29	21.50	7.73

The margin of decrease in each class is small, but the tendency is in the right direction. This presentation effectually allays any fear that, notwithstanding the efforts of Massachusetts in behalf of public instruction, illiteracy is increasing here. The reverse is the fact.

We have not yet touched the vital point, however, for be it remembered, this includes illiterates of all ages, many of whom have come into the State after reaching maturity, and are therefore beyond the reach of elementary instruction. Illiterate minors may properly be subjected to compulsory education. The tendency of our legislation in recent years has been to strengthen and extend the statutes regulating the instruction of minors. It is therefore profitable to determine what proportion of our illiterates are of this class. So far as relates to our present condition this query is answered in the following summary derived from Tables I. to IV. : —

TABLE VII. — *Illiterate Minors Compared with Total Illiterates. 1885.*

DESCRIPTION.	AGES, **10** TO **13.**			AGES, **10** TO **19.**		
	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
Illiterates of all degrees, . .	2,340	1,517	3,857	4,360	7,767	12,127

TABLE VII. — Concluded.

DESCRIPTION.	PERCENTAGES OF MINORS, **10** TO **13**, OF TOTAL ILLITERATES.			PERCENTAGES OF MINORS, **10** TO **19**, OF TOTAL ILLITERATES.		
	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
Illiterates of all degrees, . .	1.92	1.24	3.16	3.57	6.35	9.92

From this it appears, that, of the total number of illiterates in the State, only about 9.92 per cent. are minors under 20, 3.57 per cent. being native and 6.35 per cent. foreign born. Minors of ordinary school age (under 14) are 3.15 per cent. only of total illiterates, 1.91 per cent. being native and 1.24 per cent. foreign born. In order to compare these percentages with similar data for 1875, an almost parallel table is presented, the only difference being that in that year the first age period taken was from 10 to 15, instead of from 10 to 13.

TABLE VIII. — *Illiterate Minors Compared with Total Illiterates. 1875.*

DESCRIPTION.	AGES, 10 TO 15.			AGES, 10 TO 19.		
	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
Illiterates of all degrees, . .	3,054	2,987	6,041	4,736	6,859	11,595

TABLE VIII. — Concluded.

DESCRIPTION.	PERCENTAGES OF MINORS, 10 TO 15, OF TOTAL ILLITERATES.			PERCENTAGES OF MINORS, 10 TO 19, OF TOTAL ILLITERATES.		
	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.	Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
Illiterates of all degrees, . .	2.92	2.86	5.78	4.53	6.56	11.09

In 1875, as shown above, illiterate minors under 20 were 11.09 per cent. of the total illiterates, 4.53 per cent. being native and 6.56 per cent foreign born. Minors, 10 to 15, were 5.78 per cent., 2.92 per cent. being native and 2.86 per cent. foreign born. Comparing these results with those of 1885, we notice a decrease in each class, the percentage of illiterates under 20 having declined during the decade from 11.09 to 9.92 per cent. Our present condition as to minors absolutely illiterate is shown in the following table: —

TABLE IX. — *Absolute Illiterates and Illiterate Minors. 1885.*

POPULATION, 10 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER.	Classification.	NUMBER OF ILLITERATES.			
		Born in Massachusetts.	Other Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
1,581,961	Absolute illiterates of all ages,	5,214	3,994	87,562	96,770
	Minors, 10 to 13, . . .	791	196	875	1,862
	Minors, 10 to 19, . . .	1,710	711	5,906	8,327

TABLE IX. — Concluded.

Population, 10 Years of Age and Over.	Classification.	Percentage of Illiterates of Population.			
		Born in Massachusetts.	Other Native Born.	Foreign Born.	Total.
1,581,961	Absolute illiterates of all ages,	0.33	0.25	5.54	6.12
	Minors, 10 to 13, . . .	0.05	0.01	0.06	0.12
	Minors, 10 to 19, . . .	0.11	0.05	0.37	0.53

The striking fact appears above that while absolute illiterates of all ages and all nativities are 6.12 per cent. of population ten years of age and over, foreign born illiterates being 5.54 per cent., those born in Massachusetts are only about *three-tenths of one per cent.*, and other native born *twenty-five hundredths of one per cent.* Absolutely illiterate minors under twenty of all nativities are about *five-tenths of one per cent. only* of population, those born in Massachusetts being *eleven-hundredths of one per cent.*, other native born *five-hundredths of one per cent.*, and foreign born *thirty-seven-hundredths of one per cent.* Of minors of ordinary school age (under fourteen) only *twelve-hundredths of one per cent.* are absolutely illiterate, *five-hundredths of one per cent.* being natives of Massachusetts, *one-hundredth of one per cent.* other native born, and *six-hundredths of one per cent.* foreign born.

The comparatively small and constantly decreasing proportion of illiterate minors cannot be more graphically shown than in these tables. Presented with sufficient comment to render them intelligible they require no argument to support them. They are the latest official data relating to illiteracy in Massachusetts. Unquestionably reliable in their origin they enforce their own moral. They show plainly that although Massachusetts contains 122,263 illiterates, a number sufficiently startling when contemplated without analysis, the bulk of this illiteracy is not of her making, nor the result of her neglect. If absolute illiterates only are considered the total at once drops to 96,770, and this, as well as the illiteracy of each degree, is to-day largely adult illiteracy, chiefly foreign born. It was adult and foreign born in 1875. At each period it was outside the pale of public instruction, and beyond the reach of compulsory

educational statutes. It has grown out of the peculiar social condition of the State. Its existence, however deplorable, seems to be inseparable from an industrial Commonwealth, open to immigration.

The ratio of illiterate minors, both native and foreign born, has steadily decreased under the operation of statutes existing prior to 1885, although the population has largely increased, showing wise enactment and effective enforcement of law. Massachusetts has said to her native children, education, freely offered, must be accepted by you; she says the same to the children of those who come to her from abroad. Knowing no distinctions of race or creed, with a system of instruction available to all, she has determined that preventable illiteracy shall not exist within her borders; and the results so far secured justify the means she has adopted ultimately to attain this end.

HORACE G. WADLIN.

Boston Public Library
Central Library, Copley Square

Division of
Reference and Research Services

The Date Due Card in the pocket indicates the date on or before which this book should be returned to the Library.

Please do not remove cards from this pocket.

(Nov., 1891, 20,000)

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

One volume allowed at a time, and obtained only by card; to be kept 14 days (or seven days in the case of fiction and juvenile books published within one year) without fine; not to be renewed; to be reclaimed by messenger after 21 days, who will collect 25 cents besides fine of 2 cents a day, including Sundays and holidays; not to be lent out of the borrower's household, and not to be transferred; to be returned at this Hall.

Borrowers finding this book mutilated or unwarrantably defaced, are expected to report it; and also any undue delay in the delivery of books.

*** No claim can be established because of the failure of any notice, to or from the Library, through the mail.

The record below must not be made or altered by borrower.

R. MAR 9